/11 cont./

862 the child is organically ready to assimilate adult food. This gradual method is much easier than when /12/ the mother, because of scarcity of her milk toward the sixth month or from special circumstances, is forced to do it.

Weaning age varies in accordance with the wish of the mother and the special circumstances which may require it. The general custom is to breast feed up to three years, but one finds mothers who nurse their children up to a year, others up to two, and it is not at all rare to find some who do so until after the third year.

The usual causes which influence the Guajiro mother to stop nursing her child are: a) A new pregnancy, because the majority of the mothers believe that the milk then produced has a bad effect on the nursing child as well as on the coming one. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this custom in addition to the fact that the child may be returned to the breast when the mother has delivered the new infant. But these are special cases. However, it must be taken into account that pregnancies among the Guajiro do not occur rapidly one after the other, owing to the knowledge of contraceptives of which we have already spoken, which allows the mothers a long period of breast feeding for their children. It should also be noted that the Guajiro mother never tells the child that her ceasing to breast feed him is due to the arrival of another baby, so that, it appears to us, such a possibly pernicious insinuation does not influence the child's future behavior. b) Long trips which the mother must make on which she cannot be accompanied by her small child. When the child is somewhat older, she uses her absence as an opportunity to wean him, but if he is still young she is forced by circumstances to do it.

Weaning methods are personal and depend on the wishes or ideas of the mother or on the circumstances of the moment, but they can be grouped into several categories: a) Sudden weaning, when the mother has to go away. b) When the mother's milk is scarce she supplements breast feeding with other food.

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§53 of white education or medical prescription, try to regulate the feeding of their children, but they break the rule frequently, lengthening or shortening the interval in accordance with the [805] appetite of the child and guiding themselves by the position of the sun.

The child has his first meal of the day approximately at three o'clock in the morning, the time that the Guajiro begins [52] his daily work, the last meal at bedtime. At this latter meal the child nurses until, either satiated or sleeping, he lets go of his mother's breast. However, every Guajiro mother habitually feeds her child during the night if he wakes up and cries.

The mother feeds her child herself unless abnormal circumstances prevent this. If the milk completely satisfies the child in quantity and quality, the mother does not add other food, nor does she substitute it during the first six to eight months. From then onward she adds to his diet thin corn mazamorra with §62 a little milk, preferably goat's milk, oat soup, milk, and, much later, cheese and meat. If the mother's milk begins to fail soon after the child's birth, she endeavors to supplement this lack by other suitable food such as sweetened mazamorra or simple dishes of rice meal, mixed with goat's milk, later this same milk alone, until she gradually weans her child to adult food, going through the process just outlined. She also tries to reserve her own milk to give to the child during the night and so avoid having to prepare food during the hours of rest. The first meal at dawn, however, may be a prepared one, as the Guajiro mother, as we have already stated, is an early riser in order to take advantage of the cooler hours of the day to do her work. Before weaning, if the mother's milk supply keeps up, the child learns to eat other foods such as cow's milk and goats milk, corn griddlecake, bread -- if it is to be had, mazamorra, and fruit such as the iguaraya, mamoncillo /honey berry/, olive, and mango. When the child begins to sit up, the mother holds him in her arms during mealtime and gives him bites of food. The child learns to want and ask for food. Thus once he is weaned,

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862 In this way the replacement is gradual without organic or other complications for the child. c) When breast feeding is kept on overlong and the child is already eating normally and assimilating adult food, the breast is then simply a diversion that is, at times, voluntarily abandoned by the child. In this category may be included the younger children, or sharé, who considerably prolong the period of breast feeding. d) Very exceptionally it may happen that the mother gets annoyed with her child for biting her nipple and as punishment takes it away, but this punishment occurs only when the child is big, as logically, when the child is small, he cannot so bite.

When the mother is not able to travel, in order to deprive the child she wants to wean, or when it will not take a refusal, she rubs her nipple with the sour juice of a plant called [824] wawá and offers her breast to the child, who /13/ on tasting it cries and rejects it. This practice is repeated several times until the child refuses to respond when the breast is offered. This step is taken when the child is two or three years old and it is considered shameful to continue breast feeding so long, or when the child is small and special circumstances oblige the mother to act in this way.

When the child starts to take other food as a substitute for his mother's milk, she feeds him liquids from a vessel made [415 177] from a gourd /totuma/ (1) which she holds, at the same time

1. At present, some use nursing bottles.

training him to hold it also so that he can learn to feed himself; she gives him soup from a spoon, and she puts solid food into his hand. When he is very small she gives him lukewarm food, but later she gives it to him at the temperature it comes from the hearth, warning him to be careful. At two years the child is self-sufficient in these matters.

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862 At the stage when the child is too young to feed himself, it is usually the mother who feeds him or one of the relatives (aunt, grandmother, or siblings). Also, he may be helped by female servants entrusted to look after him, who coach him so that he may learn to feed himself.

827 853 [755] If, after the delivery and before the milk appears, the woman should have inflamed and painful breasts, the husband must place his bare foot on them for a short time in order to make the swelling disappear. When the milk is delayed, they beat the shoulders of the mother with a herb which has the property of producing a milky substance in abundance. Quick and safe results are also obtained by using an infusion of vira-vira.

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853 The Guajiro mother may be obliged to ask for assistance in the natural feeding of her child: a) when, after delivery, for some pathological reason she cannot feed him because her milk has dried up; b) because she has previously lost several children of a very early age due to gastroenteritis, which is attributed to nutritive deficiency in her milk or to something in it which makes it unhealthy; c) when she has had twins, and she feels unable to feed both children; d) when the mother's milk suddenly begins to become scarce while the child is very small.

In such circumstances she looks for a wet nurse, not because she refuses to feed the child since, as far as we were able to find out, the mother wants to do it herself and considers her maternity frustrated when circumstances force her to find another mother to substitute for her, but because necessity drives her to do so in order to save the child from starvation and death. Apart from the /14/ loving care and the pleasure she feels in fulfilling this function, there are various reasons which induce her to feed her child naturally: Scarcity of milk in a poor mother involves a hardship in rearing the child as she does not always have goat's milk (the best milk in their opinion) available, and

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861 respected. This sudden reaction may be due to personal feelings of the parents; for example, when the mother is repressing some disappointment she will often relieve her feelings by punishing her child, somewhat unjustly, for some fault or faults previously committed. However, it may be that naughtiness is immediately followed by punishment.

Furthermore, the parents being confronted with a repetition of an act previously punished, persistently remind the child of what he suffered before and the possibility of again feeling more severe punishment because of his repeated disobedience, or they simply show him the objects used to press him with a view to compelling him to submit to the paternal will.

The most common causes for punishment are the following:

●862 1. Acts against normal feeding habits, such as stealing food,
693 frequently practiced by children for various reasons: a) because he is the last to receive his helping at mealtime; b) because adults ostensibly get preference when any special dish is being served; c) because in times of scarcity it is the elders who avail themselves of the short rations, which provokes a feeling of inferiority in the child that his hunger helps to emphasize and forces him to steal to remedy the situation. This theft may be /28/ of several kinds: Stealing of food which is immediately eaten, since it is cooked or does not require cooking, such as chicha, milk, cheese, panela, sweets, fruit, or a special dish that the mother is keeping in expectation of a visitor or is meant for her husband or an invalid. To steal this food that the mother hangs from the ceiling or puts in some hiding place means that the child must take advantage of some carelessness on the part of the mother to carry out his act.

Another kind is the theft of food that is not to be eaten immediately but that is taken to be hidden and eaten later when he needs it -- while away from home pasturing the animals or when going off surreptitiously to hunt.

Another form of food stealing is that done by the eldest brother or the one with a sweeter tooth than the others. On being handed

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862 673 their share of food, they quickly eat theirs and wait till the mother is not there to snatch the share of a younger or weaker brother by force, by stealth, by deception, by false promises, or by coercion in some form, such as threatening to reveal to the parents some misdeed not known to them.

862 261 In general, the growing Guajiro child is never satisfied with the amount of food he gets, and in his craving for more he places no normal restraint on his appetite. He is always capable of eating more than he can normally hold, even to the point of suffering, in the hope of building up a reserve or because, feeling himself undernourished, he finds pleasure and satisfaction in eating to repletion. He always eats as if he were starving, which sometimes is the case, but at other times is only the remembrance of past hunger and the fear of its repetition.

Parents believe that the habit of these small thefts may lead to bigger robberies from people not relatives, which would bring about a series of troubles to the family group to which the young delinquent belongs. Also, the food stolen may be necessary and even indispensable for home use, and the theft means that an adult, a sick relative, or a visitor whom they wish or need to look after is deprived of it. One has to bear in mind that in certain parts of the country the sources of food supplies are so few that food is scrupulously rationed to last out until new supplies become available.

Children are also punished as their parents want them to behave abstemiously and uncomplainingly during the long spells of scarcity so frequent in this country, /29/ although they have their reward later when, in time of abundant harvest, food is plentiful and extravagantly used, only sufficient seed being retained for the next sowing. During these times of scarcity the Guajiro lives on a very reduced food ration and puts up with hunger and thirst to an incredible degree, and mothers want their children to achieve a similar standard: to behave like adults in such circumstances.

862 574 A further motive for correction and punishment is when the child refuses to share the food that has been given to him or that

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862 he himself has obtained by his own efforts, with a brother, rela-
579 tive, or friend who comes to the house. He is made to do so by force if he does not do so voluntarily, for this hospitality is the norm of conduct in La Guajira, as it is customary for the group to afford mutual aid, and the sharing of food is one of the most obvious manifestations of this. For the Guajiro, whether he possesses much or little, will share it with his consanguineous relatives; norms of hospitality founded on the basis of strengthening their own personal prestige, as well as that of their clan, oblige the individual to receive a guest courteously in accordance with his status and that of his group and with his standing as a visitor, a welcome that has the quality of reciprocating attentions of a similar nature received from the guest and a desire to repay the same with interest. For this reason the parents believe that they should make their child comply with these social precepts and show himself to be generous, such being ideal character traits in the opinion of the Guajiro. They regard such cases as an opportunity to train him to comply with established custom; they fear that in the future the boy may not comply with those principles which form the economic link between members of the consanguineous group and are the basis of clan social etiquette. For this reason they punish the child and oblige him to comply.

862 Another cause for punishment in this matter of food is the waste of food, more so if the child should stamp on it in a temper. In that case, he is severely punished. We believe that the Guajiro is right, because fear of the scarcity of food is an ever present problem which causes both adults and children to eat beyond the limit of their normal appetites in times of abundance. For this reason they believe that if the child wastes food he will suffer shortages greater than ever, and this punishment, by social law, will apply, as is natural, to all of them.

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867 2. A principle that the child must comply with under parental authority is submission to orders given him, whether

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264 592 giving him a portion that is larger and better than the others, which is grumbled at and envied by the rest. When there are numerous daughters and only one boy in the family, he is the favored one and, in the absence of the father, is served in his place on the dishes the father customarily uses for his food and is served first as is done with /47/ the latter. When there are several sons these privileges go to the eldest. When food is scarce the elders are the first to get it, and whatever remains is divided among the children of middle years. The same occurs when there are special dishes, which the children may occasionally taste if the father or uncle gives them some. But usually there is not enough for the child; when he grows up and is a man he will have his share of these special dishes. This makes the boys envious, and they will snatch whatever one of them may receive, or the eldest will leave the smallest without food after having eaten his share as quickly as possible, and it also explains the theft of food and provisions in spite of the punishments inflicted by the mother, which have been enumerated in another section.

Should the child have a noticeable liking for a certain kind of food, the mother indulges him when possible, giving him a larger portion of it, but this behavior cannot always be repeated as the boy must learn to eat everything, as it is not possible for him to be allowed to eat just the food he considers most appetizing. Furthermore, each child has his own dishes and cutlery for eating, such as gourd plates and spoons, etc., which he recognizes and insists on being served from. These articles are usually their private property. 415 422

862 The child of middle years shares fully in adult food by gradual change from his infant diet after weaning and by the adequate rationing of his new foods, so that his organism becomes accustomed to them and more readily assimilates them. First of all, the mother's milk is replaced by goat's milk and later by thin mazamorra prepared with a little milk, until he gets only this. They gradually feed him the various kinds of

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chichas and cojosa (sour milk), and, when he cuts his teeth, solid food which had previously had to be mashed for easier swallowing. After passing this period, the child eats the same as any adult, with slight differences marked by the family organization, as we have just seen, receiving the plain food served since it is unusual for him to share in any special dishes which the adult members of the household may eat.

During periods of scarcity the gathering and use of wild fruits is an important item in the household economy. The Guajiro, when he finds any such fruit, will immediately eat as much as he can, until satiety is reached. Regularity in hours of eating is very difficult in such circumstances -- one might say that the Guajiro has no fixed mealtimes, but that he eats when he obtains some food. In normal times and in homes where the shortage of food is not much felt, the family's hours /48/ for meals are more or less as follows: On rising, very early, they take a little coffee with panela, if there is any, or more often a gourdful of cojosa (1); in the evening after

1. Milk which is left to sour in special food vessels.

sunset, upon returning from work, they have their principal meal composed of mazamorra with milk, some rolls or corn griddlecakes and coffee or a chicha of fruit, corn, or yucca. The normal diet does not include the daily eating of meat, which is only eaten on certain rare occasions, the same as cheese and certain vegetables such as ahuyamas /Cucurbita berucosa/, gourds, yucca, etc. Toasted corn with salt or something sweet is frequently eaten, rice soup (a very much-used food), dry rice, or a soup of trupillo pods /Mimosaceae/, which are chewed after having been parboiled, the fibers later being spat out, or mixed with milk. At periods when food is in short supply, they have the habit of making use of the tender shoots of cacti, which are roasted over a flame in order to get